

Message Text

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72

ACTION SS-25

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R 271932Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3817

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2373

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DR

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF GROUP CONTEMPLATING SUCCESSION TO BALAGUER

1. YESTERDAY, AMBASSADOR CALLED UPON NEWLY-APPOINTED SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, GUIDO D'ALESSANDRO (PRSC LEADER). THE MEETING STRETCHED TO AN HOUR AS D'ALESSANDRO DESCRIBED THE FORMATION OF AN INFORMAL UNSTRUCTURED GROUP WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT WHICH "MIGHT TAKE OVER, IF A POWER VACUUM OCCURRED AT THE TOP." WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AGBANK HEAD AYBAR CASTELLANOS AND FINANCE SECRETARY SELIMAN, THE GROUP CONSISTS OF SUCH YOUNGER OFFICIALS AS D'ALESSANDRO, CORDE HEAD CASTILLO, TECHNICAL SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY LOCKWARD, AGRICULTURE SECRETARY AQUINO, AND EDUCATION SECRETARY MATOS BERRIDO, ACCORDING TO D'ALESSANDRO. HE CONTINUED THAT AYBAR AND SLIMAN WERE INCLUDED BECAUSE THEY ARE "POSITIVE THINKERS." THE GROUP, WHICH CUTS ACROSS POLITICAL LINES, WILL BE NOMINALLY UNDER LOCKWARD'S DIRECTION SINCE HE WORKS OUT OF THE PALACE.

2. D'ALESSANDRO ELABORATED THAT WHEN PRESIDENT BALAGUER PASSES FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE, THROUGH DESIRE, ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT A COHESIVE GROUP WITH ENERGY, EXPERIENCE AND PROGRAMS BE IN PLACE TO MOVE SWIFTLY INTO THE POWER VACUUM, THEREBY PRECLUDING A MILITARY TAKEOVER AND ENSURING CONTINUITY OF POLICY AND PROGRAM. WHO WITHIN THE GROUP WOULD EMERGE AS LEADER (PRESUMABLY PRESIDENT) AT SUCH A TIME REMAINED TO BE SEEN. THE ADVICE OF THE U.S. EMBASSY WOULD BE SOUGHT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, HE CONCLUDED.

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3. COMMENT: IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE TWO RECENTLY-APPOINTED SOCIAL CHRISTIANS (LOCKWARD AND D'ALESSANDRO) ARE TAKING THE LEAD IN PULLING SUCH A GROUP TOGETHER. THE RECENT SHOWDOWN BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY POWER FROM WHICH PRESIDENT BALAGUER EMERGED STRONGER THAN EVER UNDOUBTEDLY SPURRED THE GROUP TO COALESCE FROM ITS EMBRYONIC BEGINNINGS. THE RATHER WIEDESPREAD BELIEF IN TOWN THAT THE MILITARY WILL INEVITABLY SUCCEED BALAGUER IS BEING CHALLENGED BY THIS COMPARATIVELY YOUNG GROUP OF EXPERIENCED OFFICIALS NOW HOLDING KEY CIVILIAN POSITIONS.
HUWITCH

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